

# blenderart

M A G A Z I N E

10<sup>th</sup>  
ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

## ANCIENT BEAST

### Interviews

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Bounty Hunter - by Gabriel Verdon

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## COVERART

Bounty Hunter -by Gabriel Verdon

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# EDITORIAL



Sandra Gilbert  
Manager/Editor

What is your passion? As artists we do spend a lot of time doing studies, exercises and explorations to hone our craft. Yet it is our passions that drive us to endlessly practice so that we can express those creative visions. Over time the driving passion may change and hopefully shows our growth and sometimes it just shows what we are currently obsessed with.

I know from my own personal experience, that I go through phases where all I want to do is focus on one thing. Over the years that one thing has changed often and generally shows where my mind currently is. The best part is that even though my focus often changes, each new thing I decide to explore adds to my overall growth as an artist.

For example, I have spent years learning how to model, shade and

light objects in Blender. Fairly recently (okay over the last year and a half or so), I have taken up sketching again. I was amazed to discover that quite a bit of the lessons I had learned from modeling was now making it easier to learn how to draw. I could "see" the objects I was drawing with a better artistic eye. Lighting, something I had always struggled with in 3d projects, seemed much easier to accomplish in 2d mediums.

The uptake of all this is that following your artistic passions helps you grow and improves your artistic skills. While some of the things you might be exploring may not seem to connect to your previous artistic endeavors, be assured it will add to them one way or another.

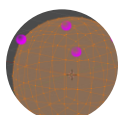
So here is a great opportunity to do a little new exploration and see what drives some of your fellow artists. We have some great articles for you as well as a couple of interviews from some very inspirational members of our community.

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## DISCOVERING MY PASSION

**A**fter I announced the theme for this issue, I sat and gave some thought as to what drives me as an artist. At first it was hard to see what my passion was because I have a habit of focusing on a specific topic, skill or craft. Quite often to the exclusion of everything else I am interested in. So over the years I have learned how to do quite a few crafts and explored many artistic disciplines.

And lo and behold there it is. My passion is actually learning. I am fascinated with learning new skills and exploring new artistic methods of expressing my creativity. The fun part for me comes into play when I combine these new skills and experiences with previous ones in ways that only I could think of.

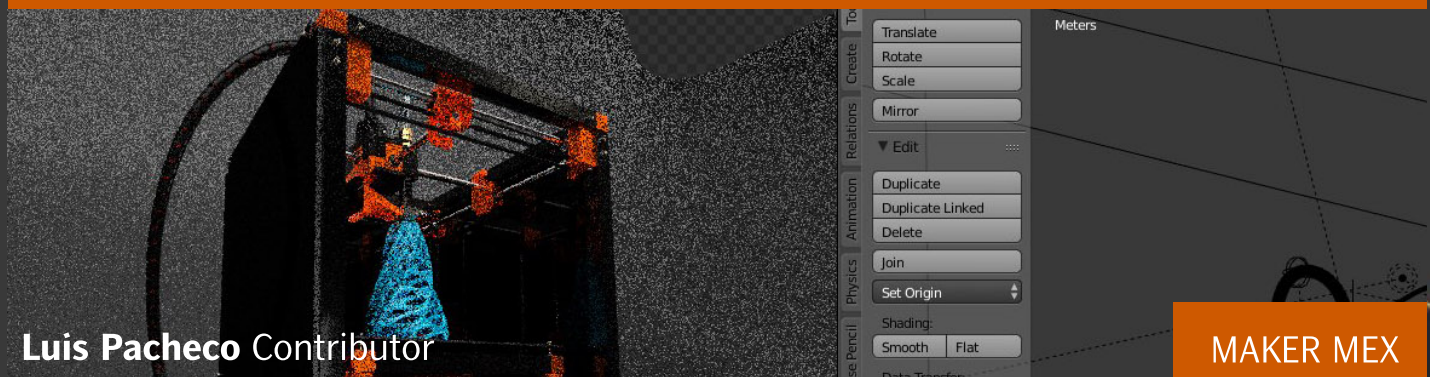
Although I am always learning something new, it has become something of a joke in my family that I can't follow instructions. Because every time I sit down to learn something new I end up not actually following the instructions. Never fails, about half way through I end up going off on an unrelated tangent and end up with something completely different than the tutorial and or instructions.

Which of course leads to a lot of awesome new creations and yes, a few disasters that could only be called epic failures. But the risk of the occasional disaster is more than worth it when you count all the successful fusions I have created over the years.

My passion is learning..... what is yours?

# MAKING OF

## EXPLORING BLENDERART AND BLENDERHEADS



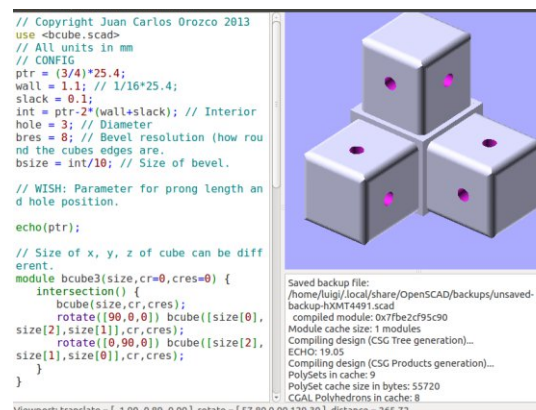
Luis Pacheco Contributor

MAKER MEX

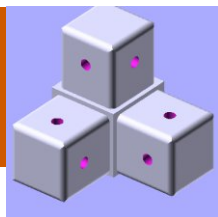
Hello guys!, I've been an Open Source follower since I first read about it, always trying to find Open Source alternatives for the software I wanted to use. I first came up with Blender around 4 years ago while I was studying architecture and I was truly surprised by the quality of it. I was used to proprietary software because some of the open source alternatives lacked the usability I needed.

At first my renders really sucked, but once I got a hold of it I came up with a tutorial by Andrew Price, and I was surprised with the outcome, it was by far the most photo realistic render I had ever made, I was very enthusiastic about it, a completely free software that was giving me photorealism only a few of my friends could match with Sketchup or 3DS Max and Vray.

Later on I came to know Rhino 3D, it was a nice software but I wasn't willing to change Blender for it, until I found an add-on called Grasshopper. Which is a very neat software that allows you to "program" your model. Until then, the only way to do something similar was by scripting with Python. The first time I read about Blender's Sverchok add-on, I was excited someone was actually developing a Blender alternative for Grasshopper. I tried to use it but I never really had a project that required it until my partner Juan Carlos, a very experienced computer programmer was modeling some parts for a 3D printer we were developing in our com-







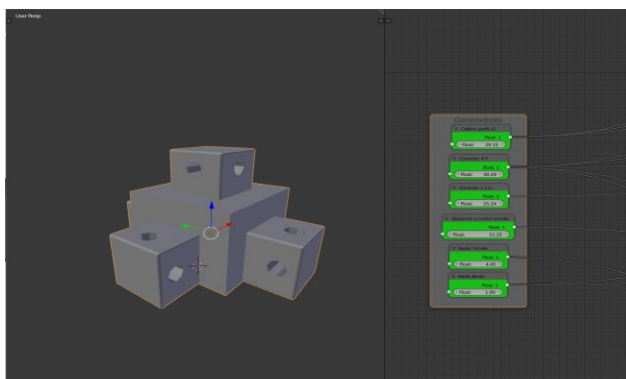
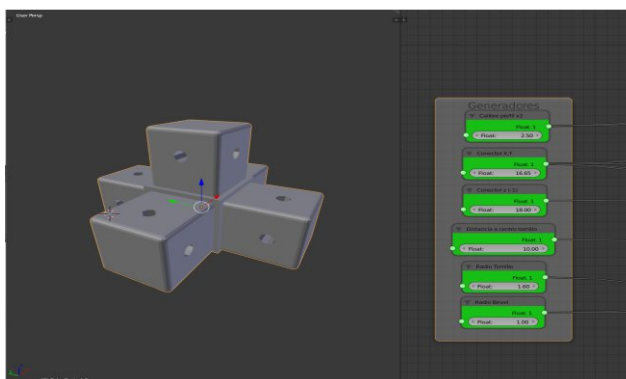
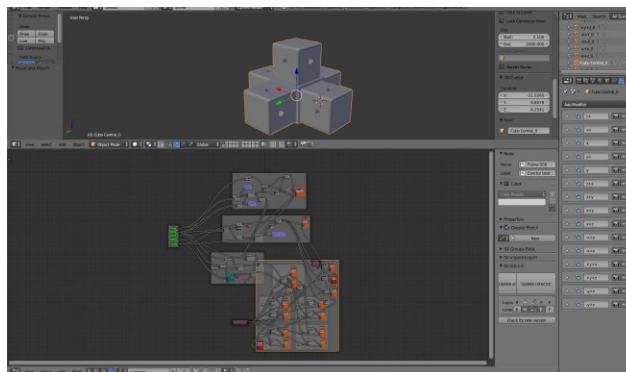
## MAKER MEX

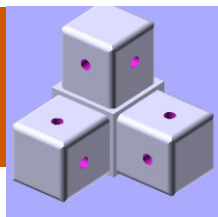
pany with OpenSCAD (Img01).

When he showed me how easy it was to change the design in order to customize it, I wanted to replicate the result in Blender, to make a better design process. My first test was with Blender Python Scripting, but I gave up when I found Blender SCAD, which pretty much lets you do the same thing in Blender that OpenSCAD does with Python language. But very soon I figured that there was a big problem, not everyone in our company knew how to program, much less make geometry with it. I then remembered about Sverchok and started to make some tests.

Very soon I was able to replicate my partner's algorithm and even add a few more parameters to it (Img02). I was happy to see how easy it was to achieve the same result by only connecting a few boxes, even better, you only needed to modify the content in 6 boxes (Img 03,04) that I could label to completely change the parameters for this model, this made it very simple for everyone to make changes when needed and iterate faster.

With Blender we were able to preview the whole printer before we even built it (Img05). It helped us make some design tests, decisions and changes, that I'm sure it would have taken





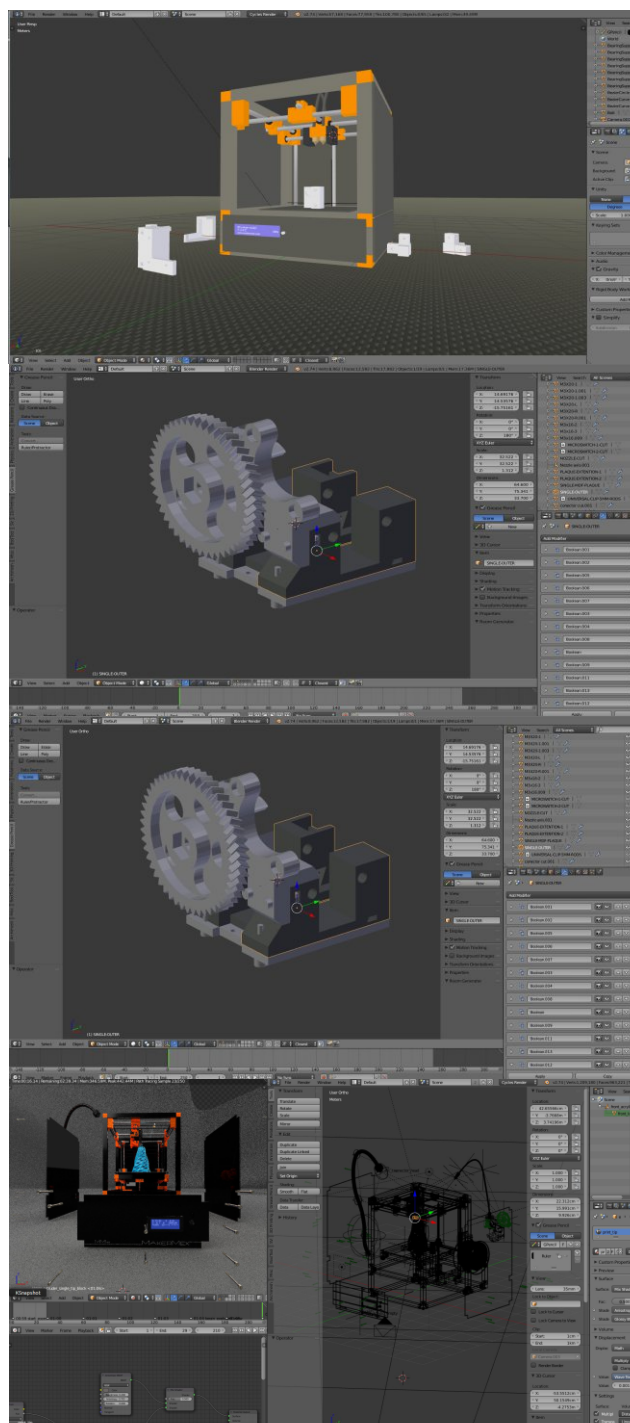
## MAKER MEX

so much longer in OpenScad.

The most valuable thing was that in the same program everyone was able to combine different modeling techniques that allowed most of the team to make desired changes when needed by either changing some parameters or manually modifying the meshes with Booleans (Img06,07). When the project was almost completed, we sent the files to Mike Moore, a really cool Blender artist from California who helped us make some photo-realistic animations and renders (Img08,09).

This way most of the design process was made in Blender, instead of using 2 or 3 different software suites to complete the different stages for development and rendering. I'm not a Blender expert (I hope to become one soon :) ), but with a great team and collaboration we were able to design and build a 3D printer in it, which got funded on Kickstarter some months ago.

Mike Moore's animation at our Kickstarter video is here. You can also download the different design files from Blender and OpenScad here ●





# MAKING OF

EXPLORING BLENDERART AND BLENDERHEADS

**Krzysztof Bozalek** Contributor

3D MODELS FROM IMAGE: A TIP

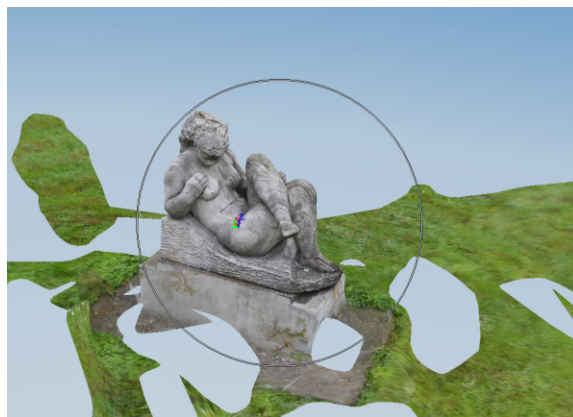
**T**oday I have something different for you. It's suppose to be a Blender tip, but I think it can be useful and save you a lot of work. And if you don't like to spend time modelling, its just for you. I presume most of you heard of First President 3D Print. Have a look at this.



Its a technology that takes photograph of an particulat you want to be converted into a 3d model and does computations to produce a 3d model along with applying the texture onit from te photographs themselves, making it a realistic 3d model ina a jiffy.

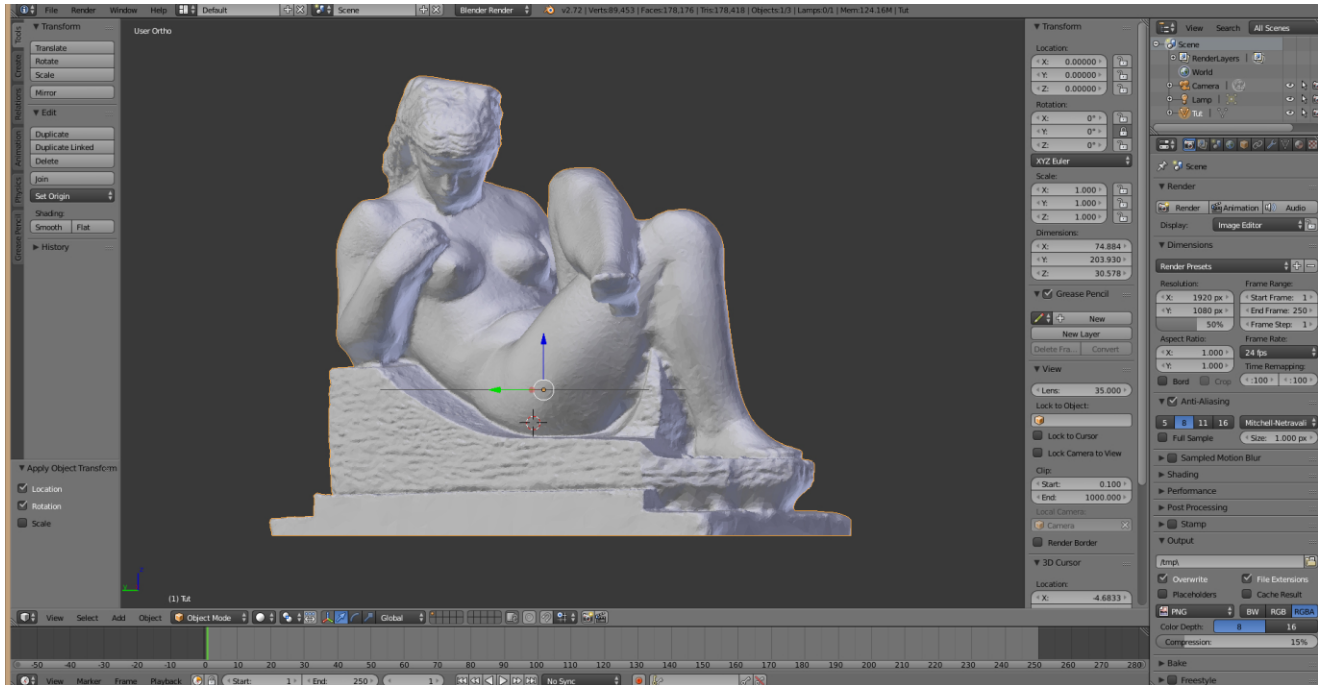
First you photograph a set of pictures from various angles of your model you want to convert to 3D. For instance a sculpture such as this one.

Then upload all the images to the server and press the "Create Project" button. The softwares tried to find a model from all the image 2d data then calculates and developes a 3D model which





## 3D MODELS FORM IMAGE: A TIP



is fully textured.

And it's ready. You get a 3D model ready to be used in Blender. In the image above here is the imported 3d mesh in to blender, point to note is this that the mesh though good but will not be optimised for realtime use and will require retopologising if needed be.

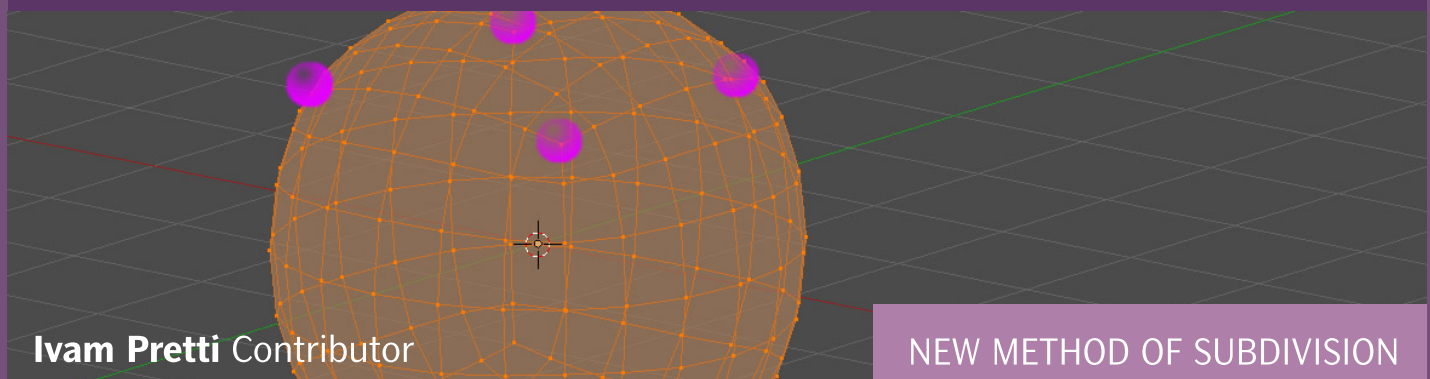
You even get a set of textures for your model as can be seen in the image on the right. The textures are automatically cut and picked from the photographs.



Autodesk 123D Catch. Is free to use for non commercial use, but if you need, you can buy the license for 1 month for \$9.99 ●

# MAKING OF

## EXPLORING BLENDERART AND BLENDERHEADS

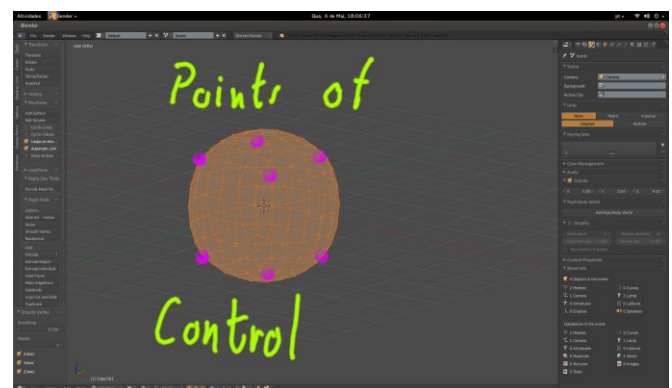
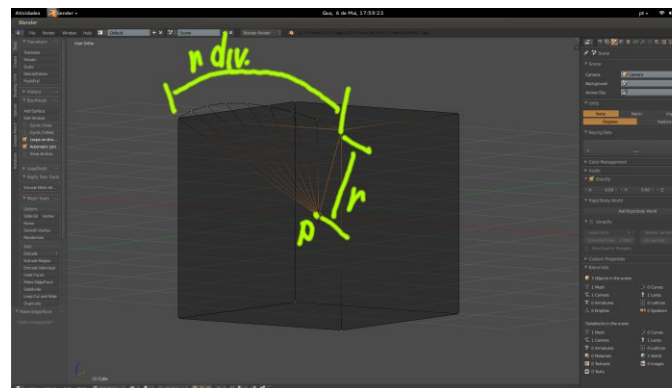


In the early days of computer graphics in order to get images, command lines were used. The grid points were slightly disordered and surfaces had imperfections. With the arrival of the Catmull-Clark method, it was possible to gain more control in generating surfaces. Now the Pretti method is here to correct the mistakes of the more traditional method of subdivision.

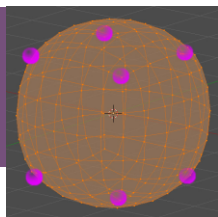
I have developed a concept for a new method (called the Pretti method) for subdivisions that can be done in a linear fashion rather than in the traditional quadratic Catmull-Clark method.

From a central point of the cube, a diagonal is used as the radius to find the way points. The arc formed between the edges of the cube can be divided into  $n$  divisions linearly, ie 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, etc., instead of the quadratic number of faces. I prepared a series of images to show how this method can be used to obtain subdivisions.

It has advantages in what is meant by con-



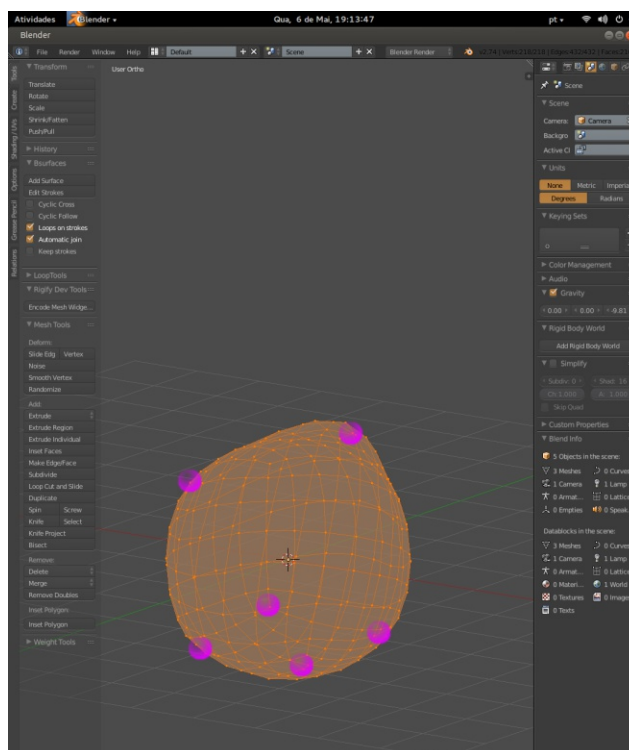




# NEW METHOD OF SUBDIVISION

trol from the grid, because the control points are established in the control surface instead of an external cage. In addition to generating spherical surfaces instead of slightly square.

It is worth noting that it is only a concept, there is still much work to do because so far it has been developed just for a cube ●



# MAKING OF

EXPLORING BLENDERART AND BLENDERHEADS



Ivam Pretti Contributor

ANCIENT BEAST GAME PROJECT

**H**eya! My name is Vali, keep reading and I'll tell you a bit about myself and my game project.

I don't have any brothers or sisters, so when I was little, I used to watch Cartoon Network a lot. I live in Europe, Romania, so I'm not a native English speaker and around here many don't even speak English, to my surprise. But back then, cartoons didn't used to be dubbed or subtitled, so I learned English pretty well even before going to kindergarten, which helped me a lot later on. I used to draw a lot of creatures and characters in a little notebook I had, using colored crayons.

Every few years I used to move with my parents from one city to another, since my dad changed quite a few jobs. In second or third grade I received my first game console, a NES clone, I became obsessed with videogames and I was pretty good at them too. I finished most games I could lay my hands on, having a talent for finding secrets. The dreaded Battletoads Turbo Tuner was a walk in the park for me even back then. I couldn't believe it was a show stopper for most other players.

Lacking any sort of online multiplayer feature at the time, I occasionally visited friends in order to play video games together. I kinda miss those times because of that to be honest. Even though I didn't have money, I had quite a collection of golden cartridges, which I managed to





## ANCIENT BEAST GAME PROJECT

collect by doing a lot of trading since I knew a lot of people, so when someone needed something, I connected the dots and everybody was happy.

As I got older, my parents eventually got my first PC and with a bit of tutoring from a class-mate and friend, I got good at it as well in no time, exceeding most others, but I'm sure you can relate to this as well to some degree, since you're interested in Blender. When I was asked by my teacher what I wanted to become, while most of my classmates were still clueless, I told her that I knew since I was little: to work on a collaborative project that involves computer generated graphics.

I started spending a lot of time in internet café places, making more friends that had games as a hobby as well. One day when visiting one of my favorite Internet cafés, I'd seen on one of the screens a really strange but intriguing game: it was hexagon based, played in turns, by controlling an army



of mythological creatures while also being able to cast magic spells on your foes. I had no clue what it was called or how it was actually played, but luckily there was a good buddy near me that was into that game and he taught me how to play it, along with a few exploits and tactics.

The game I'm talking about is called Heroes of Might and Magic 3. I know, quite the name, but it was simply amazing and I really liked that I could play with someone in hotseat mode on the same computer, though the downside was that a 1vs1 match could take a lot of hours and even days, sometimes the final battle being rather unbalanced and disappointing. So yeah, it was not a casual type of game and it was somewhat flawed. Even as a die-hard fan, I still wanted a little bit more from it. Eventually the





## ANCIENT BEAST GAME PROJECT

company released a sequel, but it was actually worse in pretty much every way and because of that, the company went bankrupt, the franchise being bought by Ubisoft years later, being revived by one sequel more disappointing than the other, that I eventually lost interest, as did most of the old fans. Rushed game designs that mostly trimmed any good parts, deadlines that made the games unpolished and buggy, huge focus on marketing and eye candy graphics, no wonder many prefer indie games nowadays because they're a labor of love and not rushed products for the sake of delivering something just to cash in.

When I was around 16 a lot of stuff happened for me. I got into playing Warcraft 3 online and discovered Dota, which formed a genre type of it's own, which I still play now more than a decade later. I also got more into doing computer graphics and I went to a couple of the biggest online cg communities and looked through all the members listed, adding the ones that had Yahoo Messenger contact info, chatting with any that I could manage, eventually doing a conference with the most talented ones, which sparked a really awesome collaborative project, called Shards of Asgard at the time, being about vikings and Ragnarok. The project eventually died because the technology for doing something massive over the internet wasn't quite there yet and I wasn't very skilled at the time either, so at times the project lacked vision or simply tried to be too much, like both an animation and a 3d video game.

Anyway, I learned from my mistakes so from its ashes something more doable ignited, as I was about to stumble upon something great and technology would eventually come to the point I envisioned and craved for so long, but one step at a time... Thanks to word of mouth I discovered the Linux operating sys-





## ANCIENT BEAST GAME PROJECT



tem and switched to Ubuntu, forcing myself to only use open source software, like Gimp and Blender. I really liked the free open source software ideology and with time even converted both my parents to Linux, as both of them have laptops, which I constantly had to maintain as my folks clicked on shady ads and their Windows operating system would start to act weird in no time. Even though I knew to use most 3d packages out there since I found them to be pretty similar one to the other, I struggled a lot learning Blender, which had it's own way of doing just about everything, but I discovered it was truly amazing, being the 8th Wonder of the World for me: a small package, yet so powerful allowing you to do pretty much everything you wanted in it, simply mind-blowing, I felt very empowered.

While I was in high-school, most of my classmates were into Chess, playing matches during the sport class. I was never really a good Chess player, but I constantly researched it, figuring out its design flaws. I was also constantly playing Dota and other video games, like strategies, beat'em ups, first person shooters. Eventually figured out I want





## ANCIENT BEAST GAME PROJECT

to make an indie game rather than an animation project, so I got in touch with a few artists and programmers and started to experiment, finally stumbling into something great with huge potential by mixing elements from Chess, mobas (Dota, League of Legends etc.), and Heroes of Might and Magic 3, which still has a lot of fans craving for a proper sequel.

This is how Ancient Beast was born, being free open source, playable right from the browser without installing anything. Besides battling 1vs1, you can also pair up with a friend and go 2 versus 2, which will be very convenient in the near future, especially when having a pizza party in front of the living room smart-TV. It's one of the few games designed not to rely on randomness and totally avoids any pay-to-win elements, meant to eventually work on pretty much any device and allowing an unlimited number of gameplay possibilities by having players starting out with only one unit that can summon and control



a wide and constantly growing variety of creatures by using advanced 3d printers in the form of gloves (gauntlets to be more precise). Each unit has unique stats and abilities, so it's kinda like a tool, being up to each player to make the best use of them in order to win the match against a similarly equipped opponent that will most likely use a different strategy every single time as well.

My goal is to make something awesome, an evergreen e-sport type of game that pretty much anyone can enjoy, by working with talented people from all around the world, hopefully building together one of the best (turn based) strategy games out there. Ancient Beast is like Kung-Fu for the brain, having to anticipate your opponent with the right units and moves, getting inside his mind. I had the chance to play it with quite a few people so far, constantly learning how to improve it as I put quite a bit of time in-





## ANCIENT BEAST GAME PROJECT

to it for many years now and it's starting to come along, even if still in heavy development, so if you're looking for some game development experience and crediting, you're welcome to help out!

There are quite a few ways to do so, most important ones being listed on the official website. Take a peek, learn more about the project, check out the artwork, try out the pre-alpha prototype and hopefully get involved, as it's very rewarding. We're using Blender to make each unit come to life, also for combat locations and special effects caused by the unit abilities, which tend to be non-magic and actually easy to figure out or at least remember by simply looking at each unit.



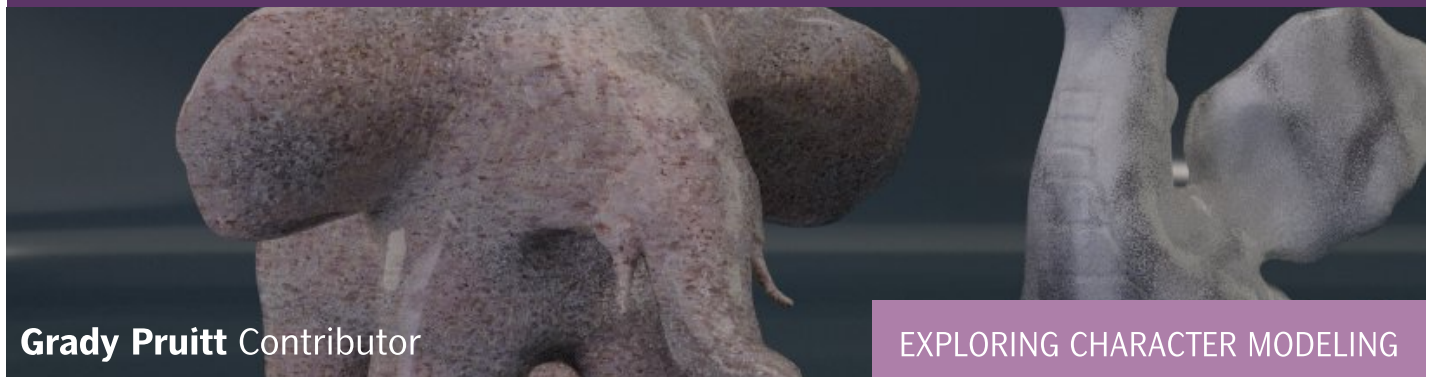
Since all the artwork and 3d assets from our website and repositories are under Creative Commons (CC-BY-Sa 3.0) license, you can even use them in your own projects.

Just like it happened with many of them, showing up in other games or even animations like the Youtube CG series done in Blender called Giants of the Earth just to name one. Many more appearances are to follow. Especially in other free open source indie games out there.

The official website is <https://AncientBeast.com> and feel free to drop by the chat or send me an email - there are also pages on social networks linked in the website's footer if you want to keep up with the project. I hope to hear from you! ●

# MAKING OF

EXPLORING BLENDERART AND BLENDERHEADS



**Grady Pruitt** Contributor

EXPLORING CHARACTER MODELING

**E**ver since I started learning to use Blender, I've always wanted to be able to do some characters and creatures. But I felt intimidated by them. They always seemed so hard and complex. I just never could get them right.

For the longest time, I had very little difficulty doing “small” projects. Tables, glasses, book-cases... Things that fill a room never seemed to be a problem. But characters always seemed just out of reach. So last year, I decided to put effort into learning to model characters. And while my progress has been slow, I feel every so often I've made a leap in understanding that makes me more and more excited to learn even more.

Now, I had learned the skills to do character modeling (or at least the basics of it) when I took the Mastering Modeling in Blender workshop from CG Cookie, but I had never really put that into practice on a consistent basis and even that course doesn't teach everything you might want to know. For example, it only covered the modeling. It didn't cover how to texture, rig, or pose a model. So while it did help me vastly improve my overall skills, I never really delved into the character stuff.

After having set the goal to learn the character modeling, I came across a book at the library one day while browsing through the juvenile section at the library on modeling clay characters. I remembered something that I had learned in the workshop (I forget if it was in one of the “getting started videos” or some other discussion) about creating “roughs” by using basic shapes. I remembered having explored that idea with a cartoon character I had liked grow-



## EXPLORING CHARACTER MODELING

ing up, so I knew the technique worked. What got me excited about the book was that it had the shapes for the characters it was going to create broken down into simple, easy shapes that could easily be created by basic primitives with some fairly simple modifications. Exploring that book led me to realize that characters didn't have to be so complex and scary, which is a part of what led to the scene and article I did for the last issue of this magazine as well as a self portrait I've been using as a profile image on most platforms I'm a part of.



Emboldened by the experiences that I had with creating the characters in a “clay” style, I decided that I also needed to improve my sculpting capabilities. In particular, I knew I had a problem with jumping to detail too quickly, something that is a common problem for those learning to sculpt. I set a challenge for myself to spend 15 to 30 minutes each day for 30 days doing a quick sculpt. The time limit was to do 2 things. First, it was to make it so ridiculously easy to accomplish that I wouldn't be scared of trying, which would help me get into a habit of spending at least some time each day in Blender. Second, by having such a limited time to work on the project, I had to work on the basic shapes and only hint at any detailing.

I knew I could pull off such a challenge in part because I had done a similar writing challenge, which normally took up about 2 hours of my day. Here, I was limiting my sculpting to way less than that, so it could easily be accomplished. As the month went on, I quickly realized that 15 minutes really was too limiting a time, and for most of the projects, I spent closer to 30. A few projects I lost myself into (in part because I was doing something else too, like watching TV) and spent longer than that, but for the most part, I



Elephant and Dragon from 30 Day Challenge)





## EXPLORING CHARACTER MODELING

kept it to that.

Having done several challenges like this, I could probably write an entire article just on that topic, but if you want to do a challenge yourself, here's a few quick tips. First, make it specific and measurable. Second, share what you are doing with friends and with a community that can support and encourage you. Your friends are sure to be interested in what you're doing, and the other can be a great help when you're feeling down. Third, if you miss a day, don't panic. Just double up on another day to keep pace. But most important, just have fun! Challenges like this can be really fun... If you let them be that way!

While the sculpting challenge was fun, I wound up spending most of the last part of the year working on a clay character scene of some kind. First was the one for the last issue I mentioned earlier, then I did a Halloween scene, and finally a Christmas scene. I had one or two other projects in there as well, but for the most part, that was all the character work I did last year.

As this year started, I decided to push myself even further into characters by taking a character through the full process and creating a scene. That was the start of one of my current ongoing projects, which I call the Pegasus project. It's a scene featuring Pegasus and Bellerophon. I had intended to have this done within a month, but let things get away from me, and still haven't finished it. But I haven't given up on it. I had expected to spend about 80 hours on it, and I've spent about 20 so far. I'm actually pretty close to where I expected to be for the time I've put into it. Part of why I got away from it was researching how to do part of what I wanted to do, but then got distracted by other things.

After Leonard Nimoy passed away, I undertook what I think is my best work to date – a sculpt of him as Spock. When I started it, it was partially intended as a bit of a caricature and was a chance for me to apply what I had learned about sculpting the previous year toward a subject I had never done. Particularly intimidating for me was the fact that I had never done anything where the subject matter came close to resembling who it was supposed to look like. When I first started this project, I again had that trouble, but then I re-



## EXPLORING CHARACTER MODELING

membered what I had learned about getting the basic forms first before the detail. So I essentially started over, and within a couple of days of reworking it in this manner, focusing on the larger forms first, then adding the detail, it started to come together. In fact, I remember the moment when I first did his hair when I pulled back to look at what I had done and realized that I was going to pull it off. Once I had finished, it was the first thing I had ever done that people instantly knew who I was trying to portray (both the actor and the character).

Since finishing that sculpt, I haven't done much character work, but I recently started a quick project that's another sculpt that I hope to have done soon. Just this last weekend, I dusted off the Yoda clay character I had created last year and gave him a light saber for a quick project. My goals, though, for the next couple of months is to see if I can finish the Pegasus character and get started on Bellerophon and possibly even do another 30 day sculpting project, this time spending about an hour and focusing on various creatures that are commonly used as the basis for fantasy creatures, such as a lion, an eagle, some reptiles, and various other creatures. I've always loved fantasy stories, and I'm working my way to be able to do creatures and characters from Greco-Roman mythologies and fantasy. And I also want to be able to take at least the Pegasus and Bellerophon character past the sculpting, through retopology, texturing, rigging and posing.

Whatever part of creating 3D art is challenging you, take a risk. Delve into it, even if it's a small step. You'll become a better artist for it ●



Leonard Nomoy as Spock Tribute Sculpt



Pegasus Sculpt

# INTERVIEW

## BLENDER BYTES

Elysia Brenner Contributor

Q&A WITH TON ROOSEDAAL

**T**he Blender Institute's newest open movie, the Cosmos Laundromat pilot (aka Project Gooseberry), is the first installment of a proposed feature film or series to be made by 12 animation studios located around the world. To get this dream off the ground, Ton Roosendaal, the brain behind Blender, has launched his most ambitious self-funding model yet: the subscription-based Blender Cloud, a single repository for everything the Blender Institute makes.

Despite setbacks (such as not receiving a subsidy from the Dutch Film Fund and subsequent story changes), the team is on track to launch a 10-minute version of the pilot in summer 2015, the originally planned date, just 5 minutes shorter in length than originally planned...which has taken some long hours and very serious motivation to pull off.

As Project Gooseberry's reporter, I sit down with Ton to discuss the project and what keeps him and the team driving toward the finish line.

**Cosmos Laundromat is the Blender Institute's 6th open movie project. What makes this production different from the previous open productions?**

Each production is about trying to get very ambitious with the technology. Doing things with Blender that you know are not possible. It's extremely useful, the kind of experience you get in a production environment. Even when you cannot solve everything right away, it's valuable. People don't want to be told how to do stuff; people want to experience it. And the experience gives you the best ideas of how to do things.

What is different, of course, is that we started this as a feature film to do with other studios. That was really different. But we didn't get enough money for that, so we didn't do it. So that changed.

**But you still hope to continue this story?**

Yeah, because we didn't get the Film Fund money in, that means that we cut the jungle,





## Q&A WITH TON ROOSENDAL

for the most part. But I still want to try to do that. But that, of course, all depends on the response and the feedback we get from the film. The plan is to finish at least the jungle, to create a more complete edit. And then invite other studios to do other parts. And also fund that, again, with the Blender Cloud.

The most feasible idea would be that we make an episodic feature film, or a series. That each team adds five minutes. Keeping all the people involved who were involved. So at least the writer who did the first part [Esther Wouda], she should be there. And [director] Mathieu [Auvray] should be there. So that there is continuity. But then you can add new directors and new writers who help expand the film. And then, ongoing, get a bigger team of people who plan how to make it. It's like the Game of Thrones: you can have a new director every time, but it is still very consistent. The direction follows one goal, but there are still different worlds.

The other idea could be that, based on the pilot, there is some production company or film company who says, "I'm going to buy this



whole thing. Here, you've got 10 million. Now make the film." There's a 1% chance, but you never know. It is really special what we're doing here.

**What is it about this project that makes it special?**

I think the way the story works. The fact that we do have a film that can work in many different styles. And, of course, the story of Blender behind it. There is the support of a global community. That is the special thing. It's not only the film itself, but the making of the film.

**The theme of this issue is motivation. Would you say that that is what keeps you motivated? What keeps the team motivated?**

So what keeps people moving forward is of course the perspective of making a film. That's the most awesome thing ever. To make something memorable. Something people like, but which also meets the team's own standards. That's not always overlapping. Everybody has their own ideas of what is really good. You talk to animators and they see things in animation that probably only 1 out of 1,000 people will ever notice, but they will put a lot of effort into it. And then the animation will look good, and nobody really sees why, but it works. Because they did that little extra. And only they



## Q&A WITH TON ROOSENDAL

will really be able to pin down what it was.

**When the Film Fund subsidy didn't come through you said something great: "If you can't get what you want, want something else."**

That is the other problem. Aligning ambitions with competencies. If you can't get what you want, then you better want what you get. You have to manipulate yourself a little bit, asking, "OK, what can we get? And do we want that? Can we get something else that we want more? What is it that we want?" That's the discussion about changing the ending [of Chapter 1] we've been having: Can we do this? Is it satisfying? Can we do something else? You have to at least make sure you end up with something that you really want.

**A new ending obviously takes a lot of extra work. What do you think drives the team to take on the extra hours needed to pull it off?**

I don't know that a new ending is needed. I think that when we finish the tornado and have the images and the music and everything comes together, this will work miracles. This moment will be a highlight, when the audience will be in awe – like, "Awww, man, this is so good!" And then you can cut that there. Bam. And people will say, "Oh, I want to see more!"

But, as a team, we've seen this already 5,000

times. So it's not a highlight anymore. It's a bit too open-ended... A bit depressed. The mysterious island, it's not really a funny ending, like we had in the jungle. The jungle gives the film a more happy twist. Which really also gives a better picture of what the film can be. It's not meant to be a depressing movie. It's meant to be a love story. But you only know how good a film is once you make it. There's no other way to find out.

**The open nature of the project, with the weeklies and constant interaction with fans and supporters via the blog and social media, do you think that helps motivate the team?**

I think that, with the weeklies, we've got quite a nice format now. I like it. But it's also not a lot of interaction. It's not like people talk to us while we are doing the weeklies. The feedback on the blog is positive, but it's not seen by all of the team. Social media is more important now. On social media lots of stuff happens all the time. I think that's going really well this time. We are getting more web coverage. For Sintel and Tears of Steel, we were sharing much less online.

**Do you think the more you share, the more positive feedback you are getting?**

Yes, people really see what we do. [As the reporter, and not an artist or developer,] you



## Q&A WITH TON ROOSENDAAAL

have a bit more distance from the process, and you don't mind sharing things [like unfinished art on the blog]. That's good. Andy might say, "Oh my God, this is crap, don't show it!" But you have no problem sharing it. Sometimes even I think, "Ooh, should we really show that??? That's crap! That doesn't look good." But that's exactly what we have to do, because we can only show how a process is going if we show the crap, too. And the experiments, and the things that go wrong. Then you continue and show the things that go great. You see progress. That makes people very confident. That's better than waiting and not showing anything and then showing something that's almost there, but still not, and then getting complaints. That's what we used to have.

### **What drove you to begin the Blender Institute's open movies in the first place?**

I had a studio in the '90s, and Blender was our software. We used it ourselves for work. When it became open source after 2003, I was missing this studio environment. Artists are fun. I really like to work with creative people. Developers too, but they really have a different perspective. Sometimes it's better for them, especially in open source, to hide in a room or at home coding. If you look at the internet, there are many successful software projects where people are working remotely together, but hardly any creative projects. Not that I know of. Artists need to be put together. Then the

technical people can support them around that. That was the concept we tried for Elephant's Dream, and it was brilliant. That worked so well.

People will say, of course, if you spent all the money you did on the artists on developers, in theory, you could have better software. But I really don't know. Because the fact that we did have Big Buck Bunny and Elephant's Dream is like a milestone event. And that helps people to become Blender artists and Blender developers. So I still think it's a good model.

### **You see Big Buck Bunny being used everywhere these days to show off graphics capabilities online or video displays in electronics stores.**

Yeah, you see it everywhere. It's the open source Mickey Mouse. Really. It's becoming a very, very important brand. I think Cosmos Laundromat will help with that, too. It's adding something to culture, which is important.

### **What drove you to begin the Blender Cloud? What made you decide to begin your own crowd-funding at this new level?**

Since Elephant's Dream in 2005, we could always fund about 70% of our work via DVDs. The film DVDs and training DVDs. Sintel, for instance, sold 6,000 copies. That was money for us to be able to make the film. But the DVD





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business is not really doing well. We noticed already with *Tears of Steel* it was going a bit down. People say, "Yeah, but I want a BluRay," but only 10 to maybe 20% of the audience has Blu-Ray. We tried memory sticks also.

But now everything can be online. Then you have *Elephant's Dream* and *Big Buck Bunny* and the training DVDs all in one click. Why not, right? You have to move to digital one day. But how do you do that? By selling downloads? We don't do that. So we started the Cloud as a subscription model to make sure that the money that goes into the Cloud is spent on coders and software, so people get lots of it, but most of it gets spent on the film. Making the film. And explaining how we make films. Which is different and interesting. So I think we can keep doing it for a while.

Another *Caminandes* story, and the second part of the *Cosmos* jungle. And maybe something new... [Ton has announced a commercial partnership to turn Dutch comic-book series *Agent 327* into a feature film.]

### **What would you say lies at the core of the Blender culture?**

Combining technology with creativity, that's what Blender is about. Even when people sometimes think that Blender is not very user-friendly, or that we don't listen to the users... I think it's the opposite: we really put users cent-

ral. But not every user; we put a small group central and really support them to do something awesome. To really dig into what does it mean to make something really good. That's what Blender is about. That's what most people like: a powerful tool that is good enough to do high-quality work. At BlenderArt people know that, of course. But you cannot repeat it often enough.

Blender is growing, and of course we always have growing pains. People are like, "How long will you continue doing this open movie stuff?" I don't know. Not forever, we can't. So that's why I did the *Agent* thing. Because I think the only possible growth is really growing further. Not repeating ourselves. It's really gotten normal now to do films in Blender.

### **By going further you mean doing a feature film?**

Yeah. Getting 20 or 30 people together. Which allows you to get not only one [developer] Antonis [Riakiotakis] and one [developer] Lukas [Tönne], but maybe you can get five of them. Or seven, or ten. Because Blender is getting complicated. In the old days you could hack a complete new thing in your free time over a weekend, but that's not possible anymore. The quality demands are so high that you now need like a month of full-time work to do the same thing you could do in a weekend back then. It's not because Blender became too difficult; it's



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just a quality thing. We don't accept anymore if people do simple hacks because many people are using the software and they want it to be stable.

So you think the commercial feature film will also drive more development of the software, too?

**Yeah. At least it gives it a focus.**

And further, it also helps me personally. I want to do something else. I want to keep motivated. Elephant's Dream was 2005. 10 years ago! So, yeah, I'm looking for something else to do. After that, I don't know. I think it fits Blender very well. It would be a little bit like if Pixar said, "OK, we make films, but all the technology we have is open." The idea is that we make really awesome movies and we share the technology. That's great! That's a great model!

**Is your long-term, dream goal to get to the Pixar level, but with an open model?**

Yeah. I've built a great network. People who can work together for a longer time. But is it possible to look into the future? For now, making films and making animation and doing things in 3D is always fun and awesome. I think for the time-being we will be pretty busy.



Cosmos Laundromat: Chapter 1 is set to release this summer. Watch the trailer here. ●

# INTERVIEW

## BLENDER BYTES



REYNANTE M. MARTINEZ

**Y**ou create beautiful thought provoking images, what inspires you?

Thanks! :) This sounds cliché, but what inspires me is "everything" and "nothing." I keep my mind open to any thought opportunities that may come through - from a tiny dust floating on air to the vast expanse of outer space. I rarely force inspiration (and have learned a lesson since then), and let my senses and imagination do the job. However, the trick to utilizing inspiration is to actually seize them. From the moment we wake up (even during sleep), inspiration is flooding our very existence, it is then up to us to convert this into something more tangible and observable, like a piece of art (music, poem, painting, etc.)

**How much time do you generally devote to your projects? Do you have a set time frame or do you work until it is done?**

For most of my personal projects, I try to limit myself to a week's timeframe - though "week" here seems to be a relative time measurement. I usually work on them at lunch time, at night after work, and during weekends.

**Do you work on one project at a time or do you have several in progress at any given time?**

I try to keep the project stack relatively low and aim to only work on one project at a time. This helps me focus and channel my creative energies and thought processes into a singular concept and not be distracted by others.

However, when inspiration strikes and there's the sudden surge of creative urgency, I pause what I have been doing and dive in to the new idea that popped. Doing this ensures that I have started the previous one





## REYNANTE M. MARTINEZ

as well as the new one, and avoid the trouble of forgetting both.

We often have grand ideas, but unless we write it down or start it, there's a tendency that we may forget about it and eventually die off.

### **How do you stay motivated?**

There are a couple of factors that keep me ecstatic. The support that I've been getting from the community has been one of the most empowering motivations that has ever happened to me. There's also the unconditional and indirect push that I receive from my fiancé, family, and friends. And to top this all off, I believe having a healthy mind and body through consistent exercise and healthy lifestyle groove all this together.

### **What artistic area would you like to tackle next?**

I have been wanting to try out traditional oil painting as well as clay sculpture - they both look challenging and fun. I've been very fond of these two forms since I was a small kid and have faint memories of them. But as I grew older, I focused my attention more on the digital side of art.

At the moment, I'm also studying to play the piano and music in general, which is a frontier in itself.

### **What is your favorite thing to do in Blender?**

Definitely creating scenes that portray stories with depth. This involves technical preferences like creating shaders, lighting, and compositing.

### **What is your least favorite thing to do in Blender?**

Waiting for a day-long-render to finish, only to realize I had the settings wrong. :p  
Thanks so much for this opportunity. I do hope the community gets something valuable out of this rambling. ;)

If you want to keep updated on the stuff that I do, you can visit the following pages:

[www.facebook.com/artofreynantemartinez](http://www.facebook.com/artofreynantemartinez)

[www.reynantemartinez.com](http://www.reynantemartinez.com)

Cheers!

# GALLERIA

ARTWORKS FROM THE BLENDERHEADS



Hongo by - Felipe Esquivel

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Swampler by Katarzyna Zalecka and Jeepster



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Razorback by Katarzyna Zalecka and Roberto Roch

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Miss Creeper by Velvetcat and Turjuque



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Another Planet - by Mehdi Abdollahi"



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Indent fractal -by Tate Reus

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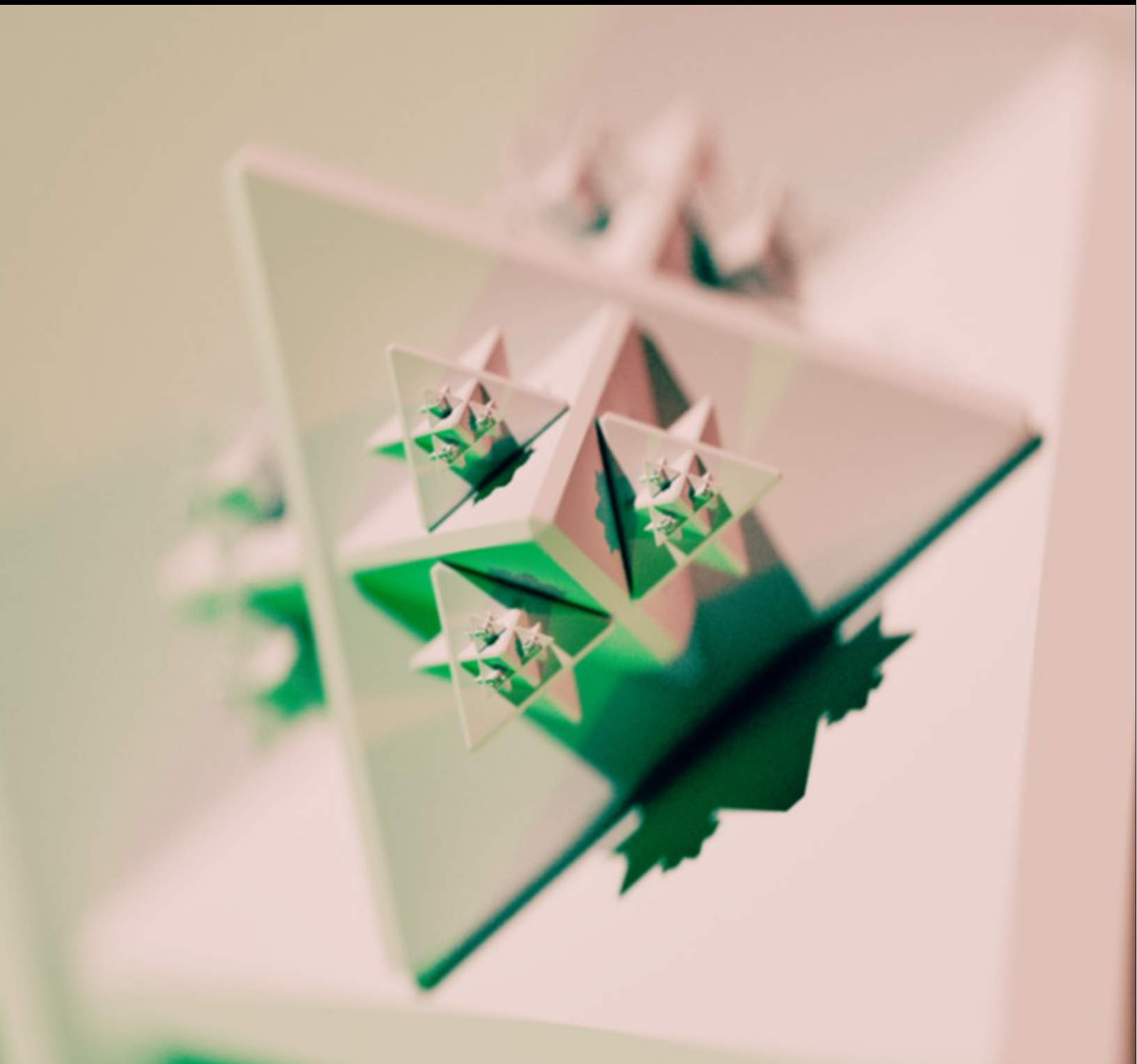
BLENDER ARTWORKS FROM THE BLENDERHEADS



Mangler by shiroikuro and pacenti

# GALLERIA

BLENDER ARTWORKS FROM THE BLENDERHEADS



Tri small -by Tate Reus



# GALLERIA

BLENDER ARTWORKS FROM THE BLENDERHEADS



Whiskey - by Leonardo Vinicius Braga